Press release
Jerusalem
14 March 2019

European Heads of Cooperation visit businesses in Jerusalem's Old City

Heads of Cooperation from European missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah today met with a number of Palestinian businesses in East Jerusalem. The delegation was briefed on the challenges faced by both large and small Palestinian enterprises, as well as on the efforts of Palestinian and international bodies to support them.

European Heads of Cooperation first visited Palestinian shops near New Gate, which have long suffered from low visitor numbers. Representatives from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and the Custody of the Holy Land explained how they are supporting local business development as part of efforts to revitalise the area. Their support includes the provision of expertise in business sustainability and financial support to rehabilitate premises.

The delegation showed its support to activities which sustain Palestinian cultural life in East Jerusalem by next visiting al-Ma'mal Foundation, an exhibition space for contemporary art. Here, the group heard about the work of the Shafaq Network of cultural institutions in East Jerusalem in increasing the size of Palestinian audiences to cultural activities throughout East Jerusalem.

Later, the European representatives held talks with a number of Palestinian bodies which are each enabling economic activity in Jerusalem through investment: the Islamic Waqf welcomed international support to rehabilitate its properties, under the Productivity and Urban Renewal in East Jerusalem (PURE) programme of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); the Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jerusalem described how it was responding to the legal, financial and planning needs of merchants, despite being banned from operating in Jerusalem by the Government of Israel since 2001; the Alquds Fund and Endowment highlighted its substantial contribution to empower residents and preserve the Palestinian character of East Jerusalem; and the Palestine for Development Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation founded by the Palestine Investment Fund, explained the rationale behind its grant financing to sustainable small businesses.

Many of the above initiatives are funded by the EU and its Member States.

For more information:

The Office of the European Union Representative
Shadi Othman (02 5415 867, 0599 673 958); Inas Abu Shirbi (02 541 5 859, 0599 673 957)
http://eeas.europa.eu/palestine